

# The **ESSAY**

# **F**LOWCHART

www.theessayflowchart.com

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**T**here was nothing more I wanted to do professionally than to become a high school teacher. Three years at university, and with a degree in English (Linguistics and Literature), I became one. I still remember how impatiently I waited for the school term to begin so that I could make the difference I thought was my destiny.

Six months into the school year and I was anything but enthusiastic. The school lacked critical resources and many students had little, if any, desire to be there. As children of poor rice farmers, they had been told, too many times, that they were more useful on the farms than in the classrooms.

The situation was dire: almost half of my classrooms were empty on most farming days and the highest grade anyone aspired for was a “C” or “pass”.

Being young, professionally qualified and a public servant, I was not short on choices. I could easily get into a better performing school, as staying at the present school was neither good for my long-term career, nor my mental wellbeing. My escape plan was obvious.

But there was something about my students that relentlessly kept me awake at night. They were intelligent. They were inquisitive. They were resilient. And they were unapologetically amazing.

If only they had another sliding door to go through, rather than the current one, which was robbing them of a brighter future?

As crazy as it sounds, I decided to build that sliding door; I created a learning resource to challenge their mindset.

I called it The Essay Flowchart because it was a process map that showed core thinking, planning and composing skills - from words to sentences to paragraphs - in the form of an essay.

My logic was simple: to open the world of learning through an appreciation of good writing, which could, in turn, foster better reading skills and transform their learning environment.

I printed The Essay Flowchart on an A3 sheet and sold it for a few dollars each, but with the proviso that it was freely available to any student who could not afford it. The money I raised was not much - and understandably so, given my students' background - but a set of pens that I bought which actually worked was a monumental celebration for us.

The Essay Flowchart piqued the interests of my students like nothing before because it empowered them to see the world of learning in new, interesting and meaningful ways. There weren't pages to read but just to follow one's instinct; similar to what they were already doing in farming as the seasons changed.

Nevertheless, it still shocked me when the average pass rate in my classes went as high as 92% and one student scored the highest mark in the national Year 12 English examination, beating every student from every school in the country that year.

To mark the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the project, I shared my success story at the Golden Key International Australia Conference to showcase the power of creating tipping points that change the world. The Essay Flowchart did that to us. Literally!

It is a matter of perspective: too often we underestimate what we can do single-handedly, so we choose not to do anything.

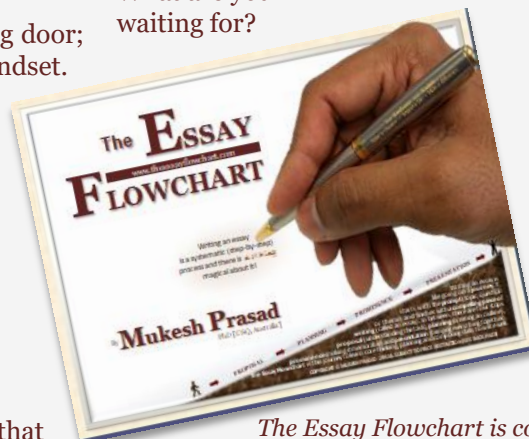
My circumstances compelled me to take a chance. I needed a miracle but I knew miracles do not happen without some input; some action; some zeal for change.

At another level, taking a chance felt natural because someone had taken a chance on me when I was like these students and had helped me succeed in life.

Therefore, it was incumbent on me to take a chance and pay it forward. The Essay Flowchart opened that opportunity to me and made a difference beyond my wildest expectations.

Even today, I still wonder, for what was a sliding door moment for my students has also been a sliding door moment for me too. This is because where there is gratitude, there is hope and action that beckons the future. So take a chance, impact a life and make a difference in whatever capacity you can. The world needs more of that.

What are you waiting for?



*The Essay Flowchart is a tool that teaches core thinking, planning and composing skills using the power of an essay and a flowchart.*

*It uses educational and behavioural theories to guide the knowledge acquisition, retention and application skills.*

*Designed as a textbook for those who have none*

*The Essay Flowchart is compact but comprehensive and easy to follow as a journey - from thoughts to ideas to words to sentence to paragraphs and, ultimately, to an essay. And this magic is available to anyone who wants to learn!*

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